NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

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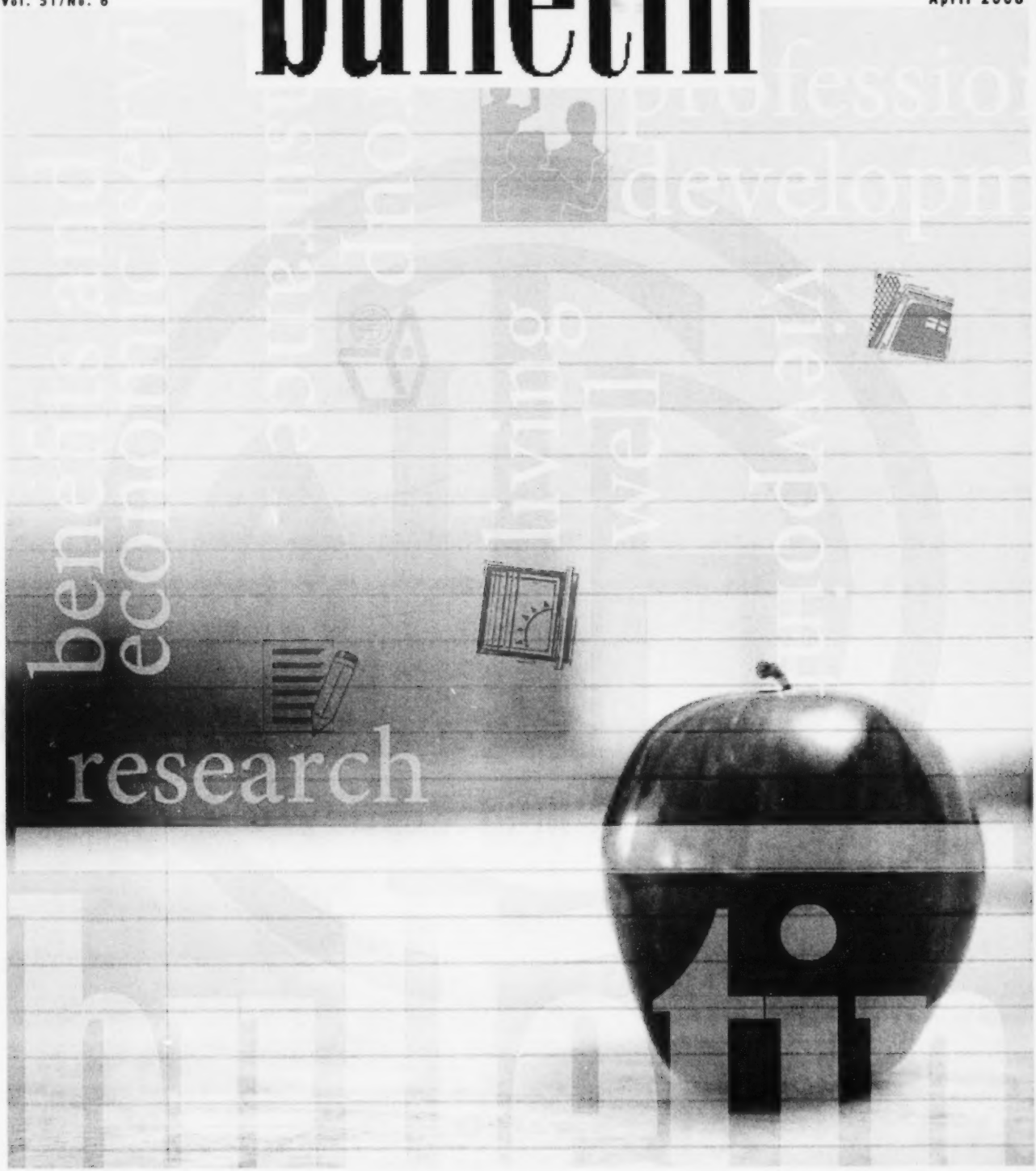

Up Front from the President

It is through open communication and regular dialogue with the other stakeholders in education that the system will continue to improve. As well, being connected to and communicating with the membership, is from my perspective, of critical importance and is something that must continue to grow. It was through your communication to your Association in recent weeks that we have been able to have some measure of success on the issue of primary reading assessments. Please ensure that you continue to communicate with us on any issue you feel is of importance so we may be of some assistance to you.

Since the implementation of the reading assessment program for primary classrooms a number of years ago, primary teachers have been voicing their concerns relative to the difficulty and practicality of assessing and reporting on the reading proficiency of students in the primary classroom environment – where other students are present. Feedback from classroom teachers, school administrators, and the NLTA Curriculum Committee has continually indicated that the process of collecting data on the reading proficiency of students in Grades 1 and 2 is a difficult task. This is especially true when one considers the fact that our teachers are not guaranteed substitute time while carrying out the assessments.

If the process is that important in providing valuable diagnostic information which serves as a basis for prescriptive intervention, then the Department of Education should provide our teachers with substitute time in order that they be permitted to give their undivided attention to each individual child's assessment. This would also ensure that regular classroom instruction continues without interruption. We will continue to lobby for a separate allocation for substitute days in this regard, alongside our efforts to secure an overall increase in the discretionary leave substitute teacher budget.

Further to the issue of reading assessments, the primary classroom teachers of this province made us immediately aware of an additional workload issue that compounded the concern even more, i.e., the filling in of "bubble sheets" by teachers. This issue has been addressed and has now been made optional for the remainder of the school year. Through primary teachers' vigilance and communication with your Association, we were able to meet with the Department of Education and then have a more sensible avenue offered to Grade 1 and 2 teachers for the June reading assessments. Teachers will also be invited to provide feedback on how the reading assessment process can be improved. Please ensure your voice is heard on this issue when the Department or your school district invites you to offer your professional opinion. As the expert and practitioner in the system, it is the classroom teacher that must be heard on classroom issues.

With collective bargaining about to begin, we are approaching the negotiations process with a very positive frame of mind. We are experiencing very prosperous economic times for the province and are encouraged by government's commitment to have an improved education system. Further improvements are not only necessary but are absolutely required in the learning and working conditions in our province's classrooms. In addition, teacher welfare issues require government's fiscal attention. Some of the core classroom concerns and teacher welfare issues include: improving teacher allocations, the continuing implementation of the ISSP/Pathways report, discretionary leave, supervision of students, teacher salaries, allowances and benefits, and teacher selected and directed professional development.

We will continue to work diligently toward securing improvements for all our members in these vital areas. Please remain in touch with your Association and contact us when you feel we can be of assistance to you. Allow me to thank you for all that you do for your students, your colleagues, your schools and the NLTA. Have a wonderful spring term.

Sean

THE
bulletin

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PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

DEER LAKE

School raises $3,000 for Janeway

Xavier Junior High in Deer Lake raised $3,000 during Janeway Day in the Schools on February 14. The teachers and students held a penny drive and all students brought in their pennies. Other money was contributed as well but it was mostly pennies that were popular. The fundraiser had special meaning for the students of Xavier as one of their own, Tyler Park, is a patient of the Janeway, recently diagnosed with leukemia. Tyler's Pop gave a special donation of $200 to start the fundraiser.

Teachers organized an auction by bringing things for students to bid on. Items included oatmeal muffins, juice boxes, granola bars, homemade molasses buns, oatmeal cookies and fruit roll-ups. On Friday morning students bid on the items with the money they raised. After the auction the student council members brought around the items and the students enjoyed the snacks in their classrooms. The highest amount of $530.00 was raised by Ms. Wight's class. Mr. Sheppard's class was second with $454.00 and Ms. Olsen's class was third with $262.60. Mr. Robert's class was very close with $262.00 raised.

Students at Xavier Junior High bid on items with the money raised during Janeway Day in the Schools.

The final amount raised was announced to the school by the principal, Ms. Burridge. There was a huge drum roll by the students and then much shouting, cheering and applause. "It was glorious and we are all very proud of our students and our school to be able to do this for a hospital that is a caregiver to our young people," said Ms. Olsen. "This was a fundraiser with something for everyone."

SPANIARD'S BAY

Home is Where the Hearth Is at Holy Redeemer's Heritage Fair

As part of the Education Week activities, the students at Holy Redeemer participated in the school's annual Heritage Fair on Tuesday, March 6, 2008. According to the fair's coordinator, Mr. Robert Bishop, all projects were extremely well done and centered around this year's theme *Home is Where the Hearth Is*.

Thank you to Mrs. Mary Young, Mrs. Ruby Reese and Mrs. Mary Sullivan (all members of the Spaniard's Bay Heritage Committee) who gave up their time to be adjudicators for the fair. In addition, a very special thank you to Ms. Shelley Healey and Ms. Jodi Hutchings (parent volunteers) for setting up the lunch in the library.

This year's winners were: Grade 4: Caroline Peddle – *The Role of Women in the 1800s*; Grade 5: Jordan Singleton – *Women in the Anglican Church*; and Grade 6: Becky Osborne – *Hooking a Mat*.

This year's winners will represent Holy Redeemer at the regional fair on May 2 and 3 at Macdonald Drive Junior High in St. John's.

This year's winners: (l-r) Mr. Robert Bishop (Fair Coordinator), Becky Osborne, Caroline Peddle, Jordan Singleton, Ms. Lisa King (Vice-Principal)

Students take part in Scholastic's "Reading is Giving" event

On February 20, Ms. Fillier's Grade 3 students at Holy Redeemer School received their certificates from Scholastic Canada for participating in the Classrooms Care: "Reading is Giving" event. Ms. Fillier's students read 100 books over a period of two weeks. Scholastic's "Reading is Giving" event honored this accomplishment by donating 100 books to kids in need.

Ms. Fillier's grade 3 students with their certificates for participating in the Scholastic's "Reading is Giving" event.

ST. JOHN'S

Thank you for CUPE Local 1560

A very special thank you is extended to CUPE Local 1560 from the students and staff of Classroom 108 at Macdonald Drive Junior High in St. John's. For the past three years, CUPE Local 1560 has presented the Criteria "C" Classroom with an annual donation of $500. The money is used to provide resources for the classroom and to fund class outings. This generous donation is very much appreciated and has made a considerable difference for the students of Classroom 108.

l-r: Christine Fleming, Criteria "C" Teacher; Sam Kelly, 2nd Vice-President, CUPE Local 1560; student Patrick Sweetman; and Principal Keith Coombs.

WESTERN BAY

No Gym? No Problem!

No Gym? No Problem!, the title of Charmain Sutherland's book, is the new slogan adopted by staff and students of Cabot Academy in Western Bay. The school was closed due to a mould discovery in early August 2007. After six weeks the school was declared safe for staff and students to return. But there was one catch. The gym would not be available so new ways of incorporating physical activity into the students' everyday routines needed to be developed.

Students and staff returned to Cabot Academy mid way through October and have been involved with resourceful physical education activities since that time. Any and all free space in the school has proven to be valuable working areas for physical activity. Corridors are no longer just an avenue to and from classrooms. They have become sprinting tracks, curling rinks, skating tracks, long jump arenas, etc. The lobby has provided an area for physical fitness and classrooms, unoccupied during gym time, have proven very useful. Outside activities are also incorporated into the physical education of the students.

"Cooperation from the district has been tremendous in helping both staff and students cope with the inconvenience of having no gymnasium," said Brenda Singleton, Grade 5/Technology Teacher at Cabot Academy. "They have provided resources (fitness videos, dance mats, additional indoor equipment, etc.), along with valuable knowledge from others to help develop new ideas to fit the situation."

Physical education teachers Keith Neil and Stephen King would like to thank John Elkins and Tracy English for their assistance during this time, along with all persons who helped ease this difficult situation. Students would like to thank Mr. Neil and Mr. King for "making this situation so enjoyable and for pushing our imaginations to the limit". Who knew that corridors and lobbies could be so much fun!

Students at Cabot Academy enjoy some physical activity in the school corridor.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Applications invited for Margaret Williams Trust Fund Award

Applications are now invited for the Margaret Williams Trust Fund Award which has been established to promote the development of librarianship in Newfoundland and Labrador. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis to applicants seeking funding for library-related projects or assistance in pursuing graduate studies in librarianship, archival studies, or teacher librarianship.

The 2008 award is valued at $1,500. The deadline for applications is April 18, 2008. For further information and to obtain an application form contact Mrs. Lorraine Busby, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Margaret Williams Trust Fund, Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NL, A1B 3Y1. Applications may also be obtained at www.library.mun.ca – click the appropriate link under "News".

Celebrating our natural areas

The magic of Newfoundland and Labrador's wilderness is coming to a school near you. On February 8, students, teachers, dignitaries, supporters and volunteers joined Protected Areas Association and Aliant at the launch party for their Conservation Education Project. This event was hosted by Bishop Feild Elementary School in St. John's, with a delegation from Mount Pearl Intermediate. Students enjoyed one of the lesson plan activities called *Weaving the Web of Life*. This activity uses a colourful ball of yarn, with the activity leader spider-dancing over the top of the web. Denise Hennebury, Conservation Education Coordinator, led out and she put on quite the show.

The Conservation Education Project is a curriculum-based resource that focuses on our provincial environment. The activities were created for students in grades 4 to 12, though many are easily adaptable to younger grades. Each activity engages students in projects such as learning about the unique ecosystems in Newfoundland and Labrador and debating the social and environmental needs surrounding locally relevant conservation issues. "This package has been reviewed and approved by the Department of Education and we are excited to finally get it into the schools," said Ms. Hennebury.

Ms. Hennebury will be touring the Island and Labrador throughout the spring, offering orientation sessions to groups of teachers who request one. Each school in the province will receive a Conservation Education Project kit and these teaching materials will also be available to everyone on their website (www.paanl.org) for free. Teachers and students are encouraged to email suggestions and comments about activities they have experienced.

The Internet helps this curriculum-based Conservation Education Project become a dynamic resource. Students and teachers now have a new tool to celebrate the magic of our own natural areas while covering curriculum mandates.

For more information contact Denise Hennebury, Conservation Education Coordinator, denise.hennebury@nf.aibn.com, Tel: 709-726-2603.

CANADA

No Child Without Program

The Lions Clubs of Canada and the Canadian MedicAlert Foundation have come together in a national partnership through MedicAlert's charitable program, No Child Without (NCW), which protects elementary students from unforeseen medical emergencies. Local Lions Clubs will provide funding and community-based support to expand and implement NCW across Canada.

The Lions Clubs of Canada will act as a local contact for the No Child Without program in the communities where they live. MedicAlert bracelets and necklets will now feature an engraving of the Lions Club logo in recognition of their outstanding contribution to this cause.

Parents are immediately notified by MedicAlert when the hotline receives a call about their child. Many parents of children who wear MedicAlert bracelets have found it reassuring to know that they will be informed if their child has had a medical emergency and that proper care was quickly provided.

MedicAlert's No Child Without program focuses on children who suffer from allergies like peanuts, childhood diabetes and asthma, and also helps children with other pre-existing medical conditions.

The goal of the No Child Without program is to provide elementary students across Canada a MedicAlert bracelet or necklet custom-engraved with the child's medical information, member ID and the MedicAlert 24-hour Emergency Hotline number. By calling the number, school staff or health care providers have immediate access to vital information from the child's electronic health record, including existing medical conditions, medications, allergies, special needs, physician and family contacts.

The No Child Without program was launched nationally in November 2006 and over the next five years it will be offered to all of Canada's 12,000 elementary schools. The program was developed in the spirit of Canadian health care to assist every child regardless of their financial resources. The No Child Without program is funded in part by a $2 million contribution from the Government of Canada. MedicAlert relies on the generous donations from its members and corporations, government, foundations and individuals to support its mission.

Teachers call on parents to boycott BULLY

Teachers throughout Canada, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, North America, Australia and South Korea are calling on parents to boycott the mean-spirited and harmful video game: *Bully: Scholarship Edition* released March 4, 2008. The producer of the video is the Vancouver-based Rockstar.

"Instead of ridding the school yard of bullies as the promotional materials claims, this video trivializes vicious bullying to an afternoon lark," says Emily Noble, President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). "It stereotypes female students as either sex-pot cheerleaders or overweight losers."

In both the 2006 version of *Bully* and the *Bully: Scholarship Edition*, the American Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB), a non-regulated industry rating group, commented that the *Bully* video game depicted scenes of violence, crude language, sexual themes, use of tobacco and alcohol, and crude humour. The 2008 version also warned parents that the game shows 'animated blood'.

"With bullying and school violence high on the agenda of public concerns, teachers and parents increasingly question the impact of violent interactive media on children's growing minds and bodies," says Noble. "The proliferation of cyberbullying via cell phones, the Internet and blogs means that victims can now be bullied anywhere with devastating consequences for the victims."

Despite the video sector being second only to the music industry in profitability, this highly interactive form of entertainment enjoys little government scrutiny or regulation.

Teachers throughout the world are staunchly opposed to this video which promotes bullying behaviour and violence. Parents are urged to refuse to purchase it and further to tell their local retailers why. Walmart is one of the distributors.

ROBERT SAMUEL TILLER, 1949-2007

Robert Samuel Tiller

Robert, or Bob, as he was called by family and friends, was born and raised in Corner Brook, graduated from Amalgamated Regional High School (Herdman Collegiate) in 1966, and received his B.A. (Ed.) from Memorial University in 1971. That year he commenced what was to be a long and distinguished teaching career by accepting a teaching position in Buchans. The following year he took a position as a French teacher at Templeton Collegiate in Gillams, and spent the next 28 years with the Integrated School Board in Corner Brook, (Western School District). The last 26 of those years he taught at G.C. Rowe Junior High School where he established a well-earned reputation as an outstanding teacher and mentor to students and staff alike. Bob was a strict disciplinarian but was adept at using humour to maintain a relaxed teaching milieu in the classroom and build great rapport with his students. Throughout his years at G.C. Rowe Bob was always involved in extra-curricular activities and spent many hours helping with the badminton and volleyball programs, often accompanying the volleyball teams on road trips. In addition to his involvement in school sports programs, Bob was a willing member of many committees dealing with the myriad of concerns associated with operating an effective school and his input was always valued. After his retirement in 2001, Bob worked part-time with *The Western Star* in Corner Brook as a courier and continued to do so until his passing after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Bob married the former Jenny Parsons of Parsons Pond on September 11, 1970 and they had three children: Tina, Angela, and Robert Jr. Conversations with Bob often centered on his family and it was obvious that his granddaughter, Hillary, and step-grandson, Frederik Landry, meant everything to him.

(*Submitted by a former colleague at the request of the family.*)

LAURA (BUTLAND) DALEY, 1931-2007

Laura (Butland) Daley

Laura (Butland) Daley was born in O'Donnell's, St. Mary's Bay on February 14, 1931 and received her early education at St. Ita's School in that community. Upon completion of Grade 11, with the support of her loving parents Michael and Anne, Laura made the difficult decision to leave her home and move to St. John's to complete Grade 12 at Littledale and one year of teacher training at Memorial University. Laura then returned to O'Donnell's where she began her teaching career at St. Ita's School. Over the next few years she held positions in Jerseyside and New Bridge, and was principal for two years in St. Joseph's, while continuing to teach high school in this three-room all-grade school. From 1967 to her retirement in 1991, Laura taught at Enright Memorial School in St. Joseph's.

In 1958, Laura met and married her soul mate, Al Daley. They settled in Al's home town of St. Joseph's and raised five children together. Laura resigned her teaching position early in her marriage in order to spend more time with her young family, but after two years returned to the career that she loved. Thus she began the ever-challenging task of raising a family, teaching, and continuing to upgrade her education on a part-time basis at Memorial University, where she successfully earned her Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education Degrees in 1978. Laura's work ethic and ability to be a supportive parent, wife, and teacher while remaining a student of her chosen profession made her an excellent role model and mentor for her female colleagues.

As a teacher, Laura went about her daily tasks in her steady, quiet manner. She helped out with any co-curricular activities by willingly providing supervision at school dances and sporting events, where her mere presence made a difference. She liked to share a joke and a laugh with her colleagues and was always there to lend a helping hand and provide friendly advice to those who sought her opinions.

Following her retirement in 1991, Laura focused her attention on her family. This time, her grandchildren reaped the benefits of her gentle manner and caring ways. Laura and Al remained visible at school functions and sporting events and were always available on a moment's notice to assist in any way they possibly could. Their home became a second home for the next generation of Daleys and Hearns.

Laura passed away on November 14, 2007 after a courageous battle with cancer. She is survived by her husband of 49 years, Al; her children, Ken, Donna, Roy, Randy, and Chris; her eight cherished grandchildren, Stephanie, Allison, Laurie, Justin, Cheryl, Brittany, Emily and Tyson; as well as many friends, family and former colleagues.

(*Submitted by Donna Hearn.*)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. When does a teacher have to notify the employer if one wishes to terminate employment?

A. Termination of contract is dealt with in Article 12 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Article 48 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement. In essence, three months notice must be served if a contract is to terminate during a school year and two months notice must be served if the contract is to terminate at the end of the school year. However, if the termination is due to retirement, also known as superannuation, a three-month notice is to be served if the retirement is to occur at the end of the school year or one-month notice must be served if the retirement is to occur prior to Christmas.

Thus the following dates or time frames should be noted:

- Resignation to take effect at the end of June – notify the employer by April 30;
- Resignation to take effect during the school year – notify the employer three months prior to the last day of work;
- Retirement to take effect at the end of June – notify the employer by March 31;
- Retirement to take effect prior to Christmas – notify the employer one month prior to the last day of work.

It should further be noted that any teacher making application for a disability pension is to notify the employer at the time of application.

Having said the above, the parties to the Collective Agreement recognize that any contract may be terminated at any time by mutual agreement of the teacher and the School Board. As well, to assist the employer in making staffing decisions it is recommended that teachers indicate their intentions to the Board at the earliest point that such decisions are finalized.

Q. When does the employer have to notify a teacher if the teacher's employment is to be terminated?

A. As previously mentioned, Article 12 of the Collective Agreement (Article 48 in Labrador West) outlines the time frames when a teacher wishes to serve notice of termination of contract. Likewise, this same Article details the time frames for the employer serving notice to a teacher that the teacher's employment will be terminated by the employer.

If the employer wishes to terminate a contract of employment during a school year, a three-month written notice must be served to the teacher. If the contract is to be terminated at the end of the school year, a two-month notice must be served. However, pay in lieu of notice is also recognized within the contract as meeting the obligation to that teacher.

Should a teacher be deemed to be incompetent a thirty-day notice (or pay in lieu of notice) is the required notice period.

The employer is not required to provide a period of notice should the contract of a teacher be terminated because: the teacher's certificate or licence is suspended; the teacher's certificate or licence is cancelled or is no longer recognized; there has been gross misconduct, insubordination or negligence of duty on the part of the teacher; or a teacher failed to make a reasonable attempt to obtain a medical examination in accordance with Section 76 of the *Schools Act*, 1997. In Labrador West a term contract of less than 25 teaching days may also be terminated without notice.

Should teachers ever find themselves in a position where their contract of employment is terminated, they should immediately contact the NLTA for assistance and to ensure their rights are protected.

This information has been prepared by Lloyd Hobbs. For information on this topic or other areas of Benefits and Economic Services, please contact any of the following at 726-3223 or toll-free at 1-800-563-3599: Lloyd Hobbs, ext. 230, Don Ash, ext. 231, Perry Downey, ext. 226 or Stefanie Tuff, ext. 232.

Protect Yourself While Traveling

Consider MEDOC Travel Insurance

by DON ASH

Today's teachers, both active and retired, often include travel in their list of activities and interests, whether it's an all-inclusive to unwind in a sunny destination, a cruise in the Caribbean, or a shopping trip to the US in search of bargains. In our Google searching and trip planning, travel insurance – one of the most crucial components of any visit outside Canada – is often forgotten. Many of us are unaware that provincial health plans do not cover the full cost of medical expenses incurred outside of Canada which could result in thousands of dollars in medical fees for a traveling teacher should a medical emergency arise. The purpose of this article is to ensure NLTA members are aware of the travel insurance option – MEDOC – which is available through the NLTA Group Insurance program.

The major features of this MEDOC Travel Insurance are:

- Comprehensive year-round travel insurance coverage for trips up to 35 days each under the Base Plan.
- All members have access to coverage regardless of age or health status.
- Trip Cancellation, Interruption & Delay Insurance included. The MEDOC Policy must be in force within five business days of making a deposit or full payment for the trip.
- 24-hour Claims Assistance Centre available to assist you in the event of an emergency while traveling anywhere in the world.
- Coordination with your Provincial Government Health Insurance Plan.
- Direct claims payment (whenever possible).
- Easy enrollment – no waiting for coverage approval.
- Convenient monthly premium payments or premium payment via payroll deduction.

What Does MEDOC Cover?

Up to $5,000,000 for emergency medical treatment while traveling outside the province or territory of residence or Canada including:

- Hospital, physician, surgical and medical treatment, drugs and medication, x-rays, and nursing services.
- Air emergency transportation or evacuation.
- Transportation of a family member to your bedside.
- Return of vehicle up to $3,000.
- Return of minor dependent child with escort.
- Additional expenses for meals and hotel accommodation up to $150 per day, to a maximum of $1,500.
- Repatriation or burial at destination up to $5,000.
- Pet return up to $500.
- Emergency dental expenses up to $5,000.
- Emergency relief of dental pain up to $300.
- Incidental hospital expenses up to $250.

Valuable Extra

Up to $8,000 Trip Cancellation, Interruption & Delay Insurance per insured person, per trip is available if you, a family member, close business associate, care giver, traveling companion or the traveling companion's family member suffers a medical emergency before or during your scheduled trip. The MEDOC Policy must be in force within five business days of making a deposit or full payment for the trip.

MEDOC Offers Two Coverage Options *

- The Base Plan provides annual coverage for any trips up to 35 days each during the policy year. The total number of days outside your province or territory of residence per year is subject to the maximum allowable under your Provincial Government Health Insurance Plan.
- The Supplemental Plan provides coverage for single trips longer than 35 days up to a maximum of 182 days.

** Mandatory $250 CDN deductible currently exists, but the deductible is being eliminated effective September 1, 2008.*

MEDOC Offers Single and Family Coverage:

- Such that a teacher and his/her spouse can purchase MEDOC individually or as a family.
- Dependent children are covered when a teacher purchases a family plan or two single plans.
- Eligible Dependents are covered whether traveling with the teacher or traveling alone.

MEDOC provides rates based on Health Status determined by answering a few short questions on a health questionnaire. The health questionnaire determines which Health Option rates apply to you – Optimum, Preferred or Standard.

The Optimum, Preferred and Standard Health Options offer comprehensive coverage and cover pre-existing medical conditions that are stable 90 days prior to traveling and/or 90 days prior to booking a trip for Trip Cancellation Insurance.

Coverage is automatically renewed each policy year at the Standard Health Option. Each year, the insured member has the opportunity to re-apply for the Optimum or Preferred Health Options.

Premiums under MEDOC are paid through payroll deduction or through pre-authorized bank deduction. For first-time MEDOC participants, annual plan premiums are pro-rated in the first year from the date coverage is effective until the policy renewal date. which is September 1st of each year. No portion of the Supplemental Plan premium will be pro-rated.

Enrollment is easy... Either complete an Application Form or apply on-line at: www.johnson.ca/medoc_c or contact your service supervisor Rosann Hyde (A-K) 737-1639 or Rhonda Tucker (L-Z) 737-1559 or call long distance at 1-800-563-1528. Once enrolled, you will receive confirmation of coverage detailing your monthly premium deductions, a policy or certificate of insurance that outlines all of the benefits of your MEDOC coverage, and a claims card. A teacher has access to all coverage information through the Members Only Website via www.johnson.ca.

Travel insurance can be a complex purchase to consider. To ensure proper, comprehensive coverage, it's important to consider your personal situation before buying a policy that might not meet your requirements. Regardless of the plan you choose, be sure you are well protected when traveling outside your province of residence. Without the proper precautions, a quick getaway could swiftly turn into a financial nightmare.

Don Ash is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Johnson Inc.'s Members Only Website

On-line Tool Allows Teachers Access to Insurance Services

by DON ASH

Johnson Inc. has been the plan administrator of the NLTA Group Insurance Program since inception of the NLTA program in 1964. As plan administrator and plan consultants, Johnson Inc. performs numerous insurance services in the area of consultation, administration, underwriting agreements, payment of claims, and collection and distribution of premiums. A significant service provided by Johnson Inc. in recent years is the creation, development, and maintenance of a Members Only Website, which is the subject of this article.

All teachers (active and retired) who are members of the NLTA Group Insurance Program can access the Johnson Inc. website at www.johnson.ca and using an individual password and confidential PIN, access the Members Only Website.

On the Members Only Website a teacher is able to review his/her group insurance coverage and benefits. As examples, if a teacher is unsure of his/her coverage, or who is the beneficiary, or how much is the premium, or what is covered, then a click of the mouse at the teacher's convenience is all it takes to obtain the desired information. The teacher can e-mail his/her personal service supervisor from the website to obtain any additional information required.

A major feature of the Members Only Website for a teacher is the ability to review his/her personal claims history. If, as examples, a teacher wishes to know such information as when he/she can claim glasses again, or when the last dental claim has been made, or how much of the physiotherapy benefit is still available for this year, claims information is easily available to the teacher in a secure and confidential manner.

Another example of the convenience of the use of this site is the ability of a teacher to print his/her income tax receipt if using health/dental premiums as part of the medical expenses deductions which a teacher may be claiming on his/her income tax. In this manner, no phone calls to Johnson's or waiting for the mail is required. Simply print the receipt on a home computer.

Teachers can also print personalized claim forms, review the benefit coverage and policy information, and will soon be able to print application forms for various coverages.

Teachers who have home and auto insurances with Johnson Inc. can view information related to limits and deductibles, coverage, policy numbers, vehicle description and identification numbers, policy dates, and all drivers insured under a given policy. The Members Only Website automatically provides policyholders with some recommended coverages that they may need for their own protection.

The Members Only Website was developed by Johnson Inc. at no additional cost to NLTA members and was developed for the convenience of members. As President of Johnson Inc. Ken Bennett states, "We know teachers are busy. Through our Members Only Website we are giving teachers, as our customers, the opportunity to address their insurance needs on their own time, and their own terms, no matter what time of the day."

To gain access to the Members Only Website to obtain a password and PIN, first time users can contact their personally assigned Service Supervisor: Rosann Hyde (A-K), 737-1639 or Rhonda Tucker (L-Z), 737-1559 or call long distance at 1-800-563-1528, or go on-line and use the on-line request form at www.johnson.ca.

Learn... Respect... Grow...

Education Week 2008 Opening Ceremonies

The Opening Ceremonies for Education Week 2008 took place on Wednesday, March 5 at Mountain Feild Academy in Forteau. Poor weather conditions caused the event to be postponed from its originally scheduled date of March 3 but that did not deter the teachers and students at Mountain Feild from hosting the event as soon as the weather cooperated.

"Yesterday was a classic example of the great things that can happen when people work together as a team," said Terry Casey, Principal of Mountain Feild Academy. Throughout the entire event teamwork was evident... student involvement from all levels of K to 12, teacher involvement, parental contributions, and also the involvement of individuals and organizations within the community.

The organizing committee worked above and beyond and was dedicated to making the event an enormous success. The event truly exemplified TEAMWORK at the school. When they were asked to host the opening ceremonies by the NLTA Provincial Organizing Committee back in October 2007, the response was an overwhelming "YES" and they never looked back. The event was organized by a committee of five students, six teachers and two community representatives.

The ceremony was a true example of integration of the curriculum into the lives of our young students. The program saw students perform at all levels, from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The sense of energy displayed from day one was carried through until the event became a reality. Students from Mountain Feild were showcased throughout the ceremony. The program consisted of the following:

- A welcome in PowerPoint presentation entitled *Day-to-day at MFA*, prepared by Level II students Natasha Buckle and Robert Smith.
- The event was emceed by Grade 12 students Tiffany Canning and Barry Buckle (aka BJ).
- Singing of *O Canada* by a primary/elementary choir, under the direction of music teacher Ms. Adelle Buckle.
- Mr. Casey welcomed those in attendance by highlighting the achievements of present and former graduates of MFA. He highlighted those achievements and they were many, ranging from academic achievements to winners of contests to those who have had the opportunity to travel to various parts of the world and who have been true ambassadors for the school.
- The senior high band, which was formed this year and focuses on percussion and string instruments, performed a song by Bon Jovi entitled *Welcome to Wherever You Are*. The male and female voices blend to form a powerful melody in the many traditional and contemporary songs they sing.
- There was a drama presentation entitled *The Big Land*, featuring junior and senior high school students in a series of vignettes which followed a timeline of the history, culture and growth of the Labrador Straits. The moderators were Ms. Maisie Groves and Mr. Dean O'Keefe, accompanied on piano by Mr. John Groves, a local musician.
- The Education Week theme song was performed by a primary/elementary choir of Grades 3-6.
- The Education Week Proclamation was read in both official languages by Jessica Barney (English) and Robert Smith (French).
- Mrs. Park's Kindergarten class cut the Education Week cake.
- Tim Guckelsberger, an international student from Germany, performed a juggling act.
- The *Ode to Labrador* was performed by selected representatives, students from each grade Kindergarten to Grade 12. They were led by two students playing guitar – Jamie Thomas and Hillary Buckle.

The President of the NLTA, Sean Noah, and Dr. Darin King, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education, joined the Opening Ceremonies via video conference. Beverley May, Education Officer with the Western School District, was in attendance and brought greetings on behalf of the Western Board.

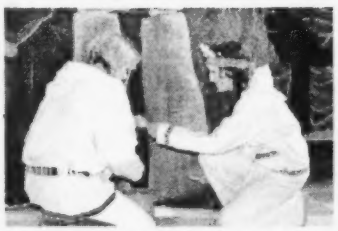
Also in attendance were students and teachers from Our Lady of Labrador School in West

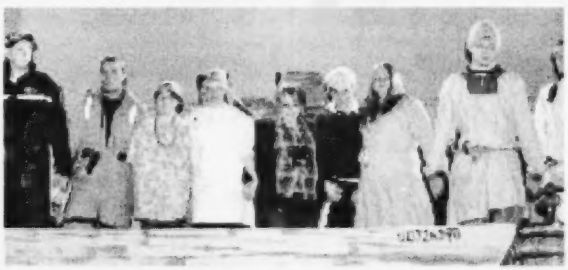
Ste. Modeste, students and teachers from St. Paul's Elementary in L'Anse au Loup and connected via webcast were the students and teachers of Basque Memorial in Red Bay. Also connected via webcast were some 17 other schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. A special accolade goes to Ms. Sheila Downer and Mr. Doug Robbins of SMART LABRADOR, Ms. Andrea Neville, tech person from the Western School District and Mr. Frank Shapleigh with CDLI in Gander for coordinating the webcast. Mr. Ken Penney from CDLI was also in attendance and taped the event.

There were some 100 special invited guests including retired teachers, municipal and government leaders, community service personnel, clergy and the general public. Parent volunteers were in attendance early in the morning to prepare refreshments for the reception that followed the Opening Ceremonies.

Ms. Sheila Park, a teacher of 27 years, summed up the event in her comment, "the celebration was electrifying. The overall feel of anticipation... the level of energy... the sense of pride in one's culture and roots... was like none other I have experienced in my 27 years of teaching".

The celebrations provided an opportunity for the students of Mountain Feild Academy to "learn... respect... grow..." as is the theme of this year's Education Week. Social interactions and camaraderie were certainly evident among the different age groups at Mountain Feild and with students from the visiting schools.





DEER LAKE

Students at Xavier Junior High learn, respect and grow

Students at Xavier Junior High dress up as their future career aspirations during Occupation Day.

The students and staff at Xavier Junior High School in Deer Lake celebrated Education Week by participating in activities centered on the theme of *Learn... Respect... Grow...* Activities included:

- Occupation Day – students dressed up as their future career aspirations. Such careers included fashion designer, teacher, jockey, movie director, pilot and wild life officer.
- Nominate Your Peer – Students nominated peers who were positive role models. Reasons for nomination included being polite and respectful towards others, helping other students with their schoolwork, and being a good friend.
- Thank Your Lucky Stars – Students expressed thanks and gratitude to school support staff (custodial, cafeteria, student assistants, etc.) by giving them poems and a gift of appreciation.
- Spirit Day – To promote student motivation and wellness, students wore red, their school colour, on Friday. They also participated in team fitness events such as basketball and hula-hoop relays.

In addition to these events, every day a poem written by a student from each grade level was read over the PA system for the entire student body to hear. Poems focused on the Education Week theme. Titles included "Friendship and Respecting Others". To encourage creative thinking, each morning a brainteaser was read over the PA for the students to solve.

"This year's Education Week was a great success with participation throughout the student body," said Mandy Menchenton, a teacher at Xavier Junior High.

MARY'S HARBOUR

Hands up for Respect at St. Mary's All-Grade

K-12 students and staff at St. Mary's All-Grade pose with the completed mural for Education Week 2008.

Education Week 2008 was a busy week at St. Mary's All-Grade in Mary's Harbour, Labrador. "This year's theme, *Learn...Respect...Grow...*, was a great choice," said Bonnie Rumbolt, a teacher at St. Mary's All-Grade. The students and staff got into the spirit with an opening activity that let them demonstrate their awareness that respect is a key ingredient to a school running effectively. All grades from K-12 as well as staff members dipped their hands in paint to create a stunning mural on the gym wall called the "Rainbow of Respect". "With respect being a main component of this small school's code of conduct, this activity served to reinforce the great importance of respect and to send the message that we all need to contribute," said Ms. Rumbolt.

CORNER BROOK

Students test math skills during Education Week 2008

Joel Hatcher and Heather Wight of J. J. Curling Elementary point to the world map indicating the home communities of other participants.

As part of Education Week 2008, students at J. J. Curling Elementary in Corner Brook recognized World Math Day on March 5 by registering to participate in the World Math Day Competition. Students from 164 countries went on-line, competing against other students to solve math operations. This year students showed an improvement of over 30% in mental arithmetic speed. Over 182,000,000 math operations were solved correctly. At J. J. Curling students were given the opportunity to chart communities around the world that they competed against. Students thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Building Our Capacity for Better Health

by CLAUDETTE E. S. COOMBS

What does it mean to maximize our personal capacity? Building capacity means that we increase the probability that we will successfully navigate the challenges we face. It means that we are more likely to achieve our goals and will probably feel more satisfied with our lives.

Before we proceed, two things must be in order: attitude and motivation. We must believe that increasing our capacity is important and worth the effort; and, we must have a personal motive for doing the work and staying committed to achieving results. Without both, we are likely to never start the process or to give up long before we reach our destination.

How do we build capacity?

Each of us starts at a different level. Our combined capacity for each aspect of health (physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, financial) makes our personal quotient unique. However, no matter where we start, we have the ability to increase our capacity for overall well-being. For example, following an injury we may have a limited capacity for movement but we know that with the appropriate supports and exercises we can increase that range of motion. To succeed we must have access to knowledge, the right resources and the motivation to do what is required.

To build capacity we do things that put us in a better position to deal with the everyday, and the exceptional, circumstances that we face in our lives. We plan and prepare for things that we would not otherwise experience. More specifically, we encourage awareness, increase knowledge, enhance skills and collect resources. We develop an action plan and routinely evaluate our progress and revise our efforts in meeting our ongoing needs.

What needs should we address?

There are many situations in our personal and professional lives for which the needs are quite predictable. Look at what we already know about our needs. We know that during report card time we will focus much of our time and energy on school work. We know that during flu season if our immune system is already compromised by fatigue, we are in for a prolonged recovery from any illness we contract. We know that we interact with others who have values and behaviours contrary to our own; this conflict will challenge our commitment and tolerance. The actions required to meet these needs are somewhat clear: protect our use of time; get extra rest; learn and practice positive interpersonal skills; and stay true to our personal beliefs.

We have also experienced the consequences of not being prepared and of functioning at less than optimal capacity. Facing unexpected situations, like a challenge to our integrity from a surprising source, will cause mental and physical distress which could leave us temporarily incapacitated. If we are already handling other significant stressors, this impact will be even greater and could last much longer. By definition, these challenges are unexpected and, maybe even, unpredictable. This increases the rationale for ensuring that we seek and maintain a level of health which puts us in the best physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual and financial health to face the routine and the unexpected.

How do we increase our capacity for really living?

To live with zest and enthusiasm takes more than wishful thinking! It requires personal insight and concrete action. It is when we build supports into our daily lives that we develop increased capacity to fully experience life and withstand the inherent negativity which dwells in our surroundings. To really live, not just survive or exist, we need to participate in the world around us. Beginning with our inner needs and progressing to environmental supports, we must:

- understand and prepare for personal essentials such as solitude, reflection, self-awareness, social connection, space, quiet, activity, sleep, emotional balance… These things give us the necessary foundations from which to build meaningful lives and reciprocal relationships.
- understand and improve relationships with family

and friends. Take the time to share and enhance the quality and value of those relationships. Through interactions with others, we improve our well-being and are able to contribute to the lives of others. Beside the immediate value, we are also collecting resources and building our personal reserves.

• incorporate hobbies or activities that bring enjoyment and offer the opportunity for learning. These enhance our current health status, allow us to continue to grow and add to our future capacity.

• develop skills that enhance personal performance and quality of life such as: time mastery; communications; relaxation; goal setting; priority sensitivity; conflict control; and, decision-making. This is particularly important in areas where we notice that we are lacking.

Including psychological processes such as: attitude adjustment and cognitive restructuring can also be extremely beneficial in learning to eliminate negativity and boost confidence in creating a positive personal climate.

How do we increase our capacity for healthy working?

To work with pleasure and leave school with joy necessitates that first we are satisfied with our job responsibilities and performance, our work environment and our work relationships.

• responsibilities and performance ... we accept a contract which brings with it a variety of defined and undefined responsibilities. How we perform these duties depends on our qualifications, desire and current capacity. Assuming that our qualifications are matched to the position we accept and that we have a desire to do our best, how then do we ensure that we perform to our potential? This has an easy answer. We have to be in the best health that we can obtain! If any health component is out of sync, we cannot achieve maximum work potential. Explore each area of health and make the necessary adjustments! Easy to say – difficult to follow though. Keep in mind that performing to our potential does not entail meeting the unreasonable demands of others.

• work environment ... Exposure to unhealthy facilities, excessive workload and inadequate materials are often beyond our direct control but we still need an avenue to voice our related health issues. Whether the approach is through the Occupational Health and Safety Committee, the NLTA representative or a Board review process, there are ways to make concerns known. We must never quit trying to improve the environment and conditions under which we work. Although many aspects of our work environment affect our health, the most profound tends to be the work atmosphere and culture. Each of us contributes to our work atmosphere. Whether it is positive or negative depends on us! If we absorb and transfer negative energy, we tend to infect others with the same feelings. However, if we bring a positive outlook and remain solution-focused, even in the most resistant environment, we will encourage others to share in that hope and effort to improve.

• work relationships with administrators, colleagues, parents and students... These can be a genuine source of joy or distress! Many of the skills we use to build personal relationships are needed in the workplace. To further boost the likelihood of successfully managing work relationships, add the following: a clear understanding of roles, expectations, personalities, unique characteristics and needs, hierarchical structure and political influence; the decision to practice and uphold respectful workplace guidelines; and, an acceptance that everyone in the mixture doesn't have to be a friend! It is also necessary to know what to do when relationships just aren't working. Despite the best efforts, if relationships are detrimental to health, it is time to seek an outside perspective and additional supports. That could include direction and assistance in changing the situation or decisions on changing our personal skills.

Knowing what to expect and being prepared for obstacles means that we can often find an alternate route, or we have the resources to make it past an unexpected barrier. Being prepared is a good motto to adopt, as long as we don't take it to the extreme!

Where do we stop?

When playing Scrabble, we might keep that "U" or "blank" tile just in case we end up with the "Q". Well, this strategy becomes dysfunctional if we also hold those extra vowels to spell "AQUA" or "QUIET". Sure it is a bonus, if we get the "Q" but otherwise, we have spent the game playing with only four letters! Let's be realistic. Where do we draw the line with using our current resources to prepare for a potential future need? In real life, there are some critical preparations we should consider. These can be covered by regularly monitoring and assessing our health status, then incorporating necessary 'upgrades'. We can benefit in our daily living, while also being reasonably prepared for whatever comes our way.

Claudette Coombs is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 242) or Marie Wall (ext. 265).

NLTA Special Interest Councils Update

by GEORGE TUCKER

Since its formation in 1890, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association has had two main foci, namely teacher welfare (i.e., articles governed by our Collective Agreement) and professional development. The Special Interest Councils (SICs) of the NLTA have been a fundamental component of professional development programming for some 40 years. Like Branches, the Councils are designed to encourage widespread grassroots leadership and participation in the Association. Historically, our Special Interest Councils have played a very significant profile in providing professional development opportunities for teachers. Essentially it is PD planned by teachers for teachers – relevant and practical – designed to support teaching at the classroom level. During their stellar history, Special Interest Councils have hosted hundreds of successful conferences, have played a key role in curriculum development and implementation and in advising Executive Council on the position the Association should take on many professional issues. In short, SICs have and continue to provide valuable services to thousands of teachers. They have always demonstrated that professional development is not only the responsibility of the employer but is most relevant and diverse when there is grassroots genesis.

Change in the SIC Model

Starting in the 1990s, SICs began experiencing a significant challenge as a result of a dramatic decline in the availability of substitute teacher time for professional development. It became increasingly difficult for teachers to obtain the necessary leave to attend SIC conferences and, as a result, active membership in many Special Interest Councils declined, and the number of Councils fell from a peak of 37 to the currently restructured 10. Given the realities that we were all facing, it was time to regroup. Thus, during 2004-06, a new model was developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Special Interest Council Restructuring. The underlying premise of the new model was the establishment of a SIC structure that would allow us to continue to offer all our members opportunities for professional involvement and leadership within the NLTA. Indeed, the new structure provides an opportunity for inclusion by all members while necessitating a focus on greater collaboration with school districts and the Department of Education.

Levels-Based Special Interest Councils

Effective September 2006, three levels-based Special Interest Councils – Primary/Elementary, Intermediate, and Senior High – were introduced. All NLTA members have been provided NLTA-sponsored membership in one of those councils, depending on which level of schooling members are assigned. In the case of multi-level assignments, members have the option of choosing free membership in one or more of the three levels-based councils. Members may also join any of the specialized councils by registering and paying the appropriate membership fee.

Specialized Councils

As part of the restructuring process, the Ad Hoc Committee on Special Interest Council Restructuring assessed and approved the continued operations of several important and viable specialized councils. The criteria for continued operations focused on four characteristics:

1. The SIC has a minimum of 75 NLTA members.
2. The curriculum, programs or services delivered by SIC members are designed to be offered by individuals who have received specialized training which qualifies them to function at all levels of schooling.
3. Typically, in medium to large schools, one or a small number of individuals deliver the program or services to all grade levels.
4. A national or international affiliate organization exists.

As a result of the SIC Viability Profile evaluation, seven Specialized Councils now exist. These are:

- Council of Special Services
- Modern Languages
- Music
- Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association
- Physical Education
- School Administrators
- Technology Education

What Do Special Interest Councils Offer?

Special Interest Councils are professional learning communities dedicated to lifelong learning and the ongoing professional growth of its members. Their mandate includes offering a range of PD programs including conferences, institutes, focus groups, teleconferences and e-learning initiatives.

Each council is also required to maintain a website and circulate at least two newsletters a year. As they have for many years, councils will respond to curriculum and program concerns, develop position papers on critical issues, work with government on curriculum development, and advise the NLTA on matters of importance.

How Can I Become Involved?

One of the powerful features of the new model is that you are automatically a member of at least one of the Levels Councils. Beyond this there are a number of leadership opportunities within the new levels-based councils. Each Levels Council has a geographic-based core Executive comprising President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Communications Officer. In addition, you may wish to join one or more of the specialized councils. For additional information on our 10 SICs, please visit: the NLTA website, www.nlta.nl.ca (go to the section titled, *About the NLTA*) or the Virtual Teacher Centre website, www.virtualteachercentre.ca (go to the section titled, *NLTA PD Programs Support*).

The new Special Interest Council structure is still in its early phase. Yet, much work has already been accomplished. Indeed, for the seven specialized councils, it's basically business as usual. By the end of October 2007, four of the specialized councils, including the Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association, had already sponsored major provincial conferences. All of these initiatives were very successful. The remaining councils also have major initiatives in the planning phase that will come to fruition in the near future. The new levels-based councils obviously have the most work to do, given their relatively short history. Nonetheless, these councils too will be very successful in time given the dedication of their skilled Executives.

The new SIC model is undoubtedly our PD hope for the future. The model was fully endorsed by the delegates who attended the 2007 BGM. An increase in the SIC funding was approved and a by-law change was passed that now allows SIC delegates to BGM to have full voting privileges. These changes are significant and historic in scope. Through resolutions and strategic lobbying, SIC members can actively engage in effecting positive change for their colleagues and themselves.

George Tucker is an Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA. This article is also printed in the most recent edition of the NLCPA Newsletter.

The View from the Inside

An E'*value*'ation of Guidance Counsellor Roles

by TRENT LANGDON

As a means of providing some context, I am writing this article wearing two hats: that of an Elementary / Junior High School Guidance Counsellor and a proud, new father of twin boys. Though being clearly different roles (but equally scary at times), the similarities become blatantly evident over a cup of cold tea, a couple of biscuits, and a repeat performance of Saturday morning cartoons. There are a multitude of keywords that characterize both roles, however it is the 'bility' words that appear to be most prominent: *responsibility, liability, accountability, common-sensibility [sic]*…; the primary, startling point being, I am responsible for 700 students during the school day as opposed to the two that are crawling before me this morning.

During a false sense of quiet time, my mind wanders to the expectation that I am to theoretically play a direct and active role in addressing the "educational, personal/social, career growth, and developmental needs" of *all* 700 *students in my school* and providing support to their 1400 care-givers during the course of a school year. I use those descriptors as they are clearly outlined within the Department of Education's Guidance Policy. Now, we are all very much aware that a large number of students and families do not avail of direct guidance intervention or programming on a daily or even weekly basis, *but* is this the key point? Do we need to re-direct our attention back to the masses and move toward the expansion of effective guidance services for all of our students? Does it require a re-direction of focus or the addition of sufficient human resources that allow for effective responses to the demonstrated needs within each of our school communities?

In taking an active, preventative approach to my guidance practice, one would assume that a great percentage of time is spent offering school-wide guidance programming, classroom-based guidance initiatives, and entering formal counselling relationships with a significant caseload of students. To the contrary, the reality within the current model sees comprehensive assessments (requiring 30 plus hours on average per assessment, with numbers reaching 30-40 annually in certain schools), daily social support for students and families (not unlike that expected of a social worker), and crisis response as related to discipline and safety concerns, monopolizing the time of Guidance Counsellors. When considering that Guidance Counsellors are allocated to schools based on a ratio of 1:500, that they are often responsible for multiple schools, and commonly have teaching duties, the true effectiveness of these school-based social agents is compromised.

Though we all do our part to encourage safe and caring environments, recognize positive behaviors, and nurture positive work ethics, the reality appears to lie in a deterioration of 'values' structures and commitment on the part of many students as it relates to personal achievement. Though still relatively young, with my reminiscing going back all the way to the 1980s, I can recall junior high kids lining up to assist with the most menial tasks of putting out chairs (after-school!) for the Christmas Concert that night; then those same kids all having parts in that concert. Or the only students sitting on the stage during Phys. Ed. class being those with casts from toe to hip; and they would be sneaking a basketball shot or two when the teacher wasn't looking. Though our pedagogical approaches have been re-vamped and modernized, a lot can be said for 'what used to be'.

Prioritizing 'values-based learning' and championing preventative measures (e.g. group and individual counselling) that meet the developmental challenges of our students would combat the lack of responsibility for learning that has invaded our schools and has created a culture of learned complacency, ultimately resulting in an increase in discipline referrals, absenteeism and behavioral incidents. Educational

frameworks cannot be limited to working our way through waitlists and maximizing the effectiveness of response protocols, but rather need to be viewed as an opportunity to invoke personal growth, critical thought, and achievement at the most basic level; that of each individual student.

An investment in teacher/specialist resources is essential to academic achievement; however, one needs to look to the daily, life functioning of our students before any major advancement can be made in terms of academic performance. In its simplest form, the situation manifests itself when a student or parent approaches my office and I end our discussion by making the following statement, "I have to apologize however, my caseload is full but I can make a referral for counselling services external to the school if you are interested." Though Guidance Counsellors find themselves involved in highly important tasks, further investment in the developmental needs of all children and families would serve to address the many underlying circumstances that lead to behavioral difficulty and underachievement; at a stage where significant change and intervention is possible and effective.

A quote that I often use to guide my practice and daily interactions is "Values are Caught, not Taught!" (Lawrence Kohlberg). As a Guidance Counsellor and a father, I place a great deal of credence in this philosophy and promote values-based learning as a means of attaining personal and academic advancement. Guidance Counsellors find themselves in a valuable, strategic position to influence and impact individual student growth and values structures, given that the time and resources are available to do so. It is through such student development that achievement, positive behavior, safety and advancement follow in due course. Ultimately, it is a case of using our common-sensibilities [sic] to provide effective intervention, guide decision-making, and initiate long-term change.

Trent Langdon is a guidance counsellor at Amalgamated Academy in Bay Roberts and President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' & Psychologists' Association (NLCPA) Special Interest Council.

Health & Wellness Promotion

Work is currently underway on the development of the NLTA Employee Health and Wellness Promotion pilot program. We are seeking schools that may be interested in participating in this pilot program. Interested school administrators or NLTA school representatives can contact Manuel Ball, the Health and Wellness Promotion Coordinator, at the NLTA office for more information or to request an application to be included in the pilot program.

Manuel can be reached at (709) 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 270 or by email at mball@nlta.nl.ca.

Summary from Part II of "How Safe Are Our Teachers?"

In the January/February 2008 issue of *The Bulletin* we carried an article by Dr. Lynda Younghusband called "How Safe Are Our Teachers?", a study on abuse and violence experienced by teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador. The following is a brief summary of Part II of the study with an emphasis on the qualitative information.

Some of the major themes generated from the analysis of the qualitative data were: fear, intimidation and threats, the impact of abuse/violence, and a perceived inadequacy of support and concern for teachers' safety. Some of these will be briefly reviewed here.

The research indicated there were times when some teachers were afraid not just for themselves but for their entire class. They were afraid of students' reactions and so, often ignored behavior they would rather have addressed. Some participants reported having to clear a classroom in fear that an abusive and out of control student would hurt classmates. Quite often as they related their experiences, these teachers expressed concern for those aggressive students. They understood that violence at school often reflects a difficult home environment and society in general. However, empathy for the circumstances was of little comfort when they faced a situation with the possibility of violence and feared that a particular student might harm themselves or someone else.

Intimidation, harassment and bullying are terms that were often used interchangeably throughout the survey results. Intimidation and threats, both physical and verbal, and the cumulative effect of discipline problems were said to erode the joy of teaching and caused feelings of vulnerability and high levels of stress.

Numerous reports of threats by students meant to intimidate the teacher were reported during the focus group, the interviews and the survey: There were many incidents reported of threats to destroy personal property and of physical harm.

While teachers felt they were emotionally and physically threatened and intimidated by students, there were a number of participants who reported similar experiences by parents. Some parents caused a high level of fear for the teacher's personal safety and sometimes that of their family.

Dr. Younghusband concluded that the experiences of abuse/violence reported in this study often had long lasting effects. The emotional impact tended to be the most severe. The teachers described themselves as "frustrated", "demoralized", "embarrassed", "tense", "fearful", "angry", "sad", "isolated" and "stressed." There was an element of unfairness too.

According to Dr. Younghusband, a picture unfolded from the research that illuminated a group of teachers who perceived themselves as not being adequately supported when they reported abusive or violent experiences at their workplace and/or off school grounds. The general feeling was that abuse/violence is usually not taken seriously enough. The desire for greater support was referred to again and again.

Participants in this study identified uncontrollable building access and isolated working conditions as the greatest risks at their schools. The majority of teachers considered that their school was too accessible to too many people and felt that if the doors were locked, safety for teachers and students would be increased. One area that was particularly troublesome for many was the smoking area. It appeared that these areas often attracted drug users and sales persons and thus, fights sometimes occurred requiring teacher interference. Participants frequently suggested that video cameras would be helpful to curtail violence and to identify perpetrators.

Dr. Younghusband concluded that the issue of abuse/violence at school appears to be shouldered by the teachers rather than the system. Teachers in this study perceived systemic abuse/violence when school policies either do not exist or are not followed, when disruptive and abusive behaviour in the classroom is dismissed as not serious, and when verbal abuse and threats toward teachers are ignored. Whether intentional or unintended, this refusal to acknowledge this problem in the profession is viewed as damaging to teachers and to students whose learning environment is impacted as well.

The research and the study was summarized by

Dr. Younghusband when she stated: "Why does the education system silence the voices of teachers? Silence with regards to workplace stress, abuse and violence, has deprived teachers of any means of addressing the lack of attention to this issue. Thus, healing from it becomes that much more difficult. Teachers need a risk-free work environment in which to teach and students need the same environment in which to learn. No one should have to experience the debilitating and corrosive effects of abuse/violence. It is essential that the health and welfare of our teachers be protected and that the issue of abuse/violence be addressed. To do that we need to break the veil of silence that has perpetrated the system for so long. There is a critical need to move from a place of silence to a plan of intervention."

Based on her research, Dr. Younghusband makes the following recommendations:

1. The Department of Education must recognize that there is a direct relationship between cuts to programmes, increased class sizes, and violence in the school environment.
2. The Department of Education and all school boards must commit to ensuring that teachers will be safe in their work environment. Policies to ensure the safety of teachers should be clear and it is imperative that they be followed.
3. School boards should cultivate early supportive and corrective programmes for students who are aggressive and violent. Parents and students must be made aware of the policies and the repercussions of abuse/violence towards teachers and student peers.
4. Counselling services to schools should be increased in order to work with students in the early stages of aggressive and violent behaviour. Adequate student assistant services should be provided.
5. The Department of Education should facilitate Crisis Intervention Training for all teachers in their first year of work and provide refresher courses for teachers within a reasonable time frame.
6. A greater emphasis on behaviour management and violence training should be integrated into the teacher education programmes at Memorial University.
7. Public forums, to address the concern of abuse/violence in our schools and inform all stakeholders in education, should appeal for a collaborative effort to agree on a standard of expectation for a safe and healthy teaching and learning environment in every school.

For a full report of the research by Dr. Lynda Younghusband, contact her at lyounghu@mun.ca.

TWO LOCATIONS –
MAY 13, CORNER BROOK & MAY 15, ST. JOHN'S

8TH ANNUAL PROVINCIAL FAIR

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

The Fair will profile job opportunities and related information for students, teachers or others interested in entry into the profession.

Come by to see the displays, talk to prospective employers, and collect information. It's a chance to discover what's available for teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Provincial Recruitment Fair is organized in partnership with:

- Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Memorial University;
- Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association;
- Newfoundland and Labrador School Districts.

Are you looking for a job in education?
Are you an Education graduate?
Substitute teacher?
Or looking for a career change?
The Provincial Teacher Recruitment Fair is the place for you.

Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2008
4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Place: Food Court
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College,
Corner Brook

Date: Thursday, May 15, 2007
2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Place: Atrium of the
Inco Innovation Centre
Memorial University
St. John's

Information booths will be set up by:

- **Department of Education**
- **Faculty of Education**
- **Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association**
- **School Districts**

and other Educational Partners

Calendar

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRACTICAL STUDY OF LAW IN EDUCATION (CAPSLE) ANNUAL CONFERENCE
April 20-22, 2008
Halifax, NS. Theme: *Educational Leadership Today and Tomorrow: The Law as Friend or Foe*. Further information: www.capsle.ca.

ARTS WORK III CONFERENCE
April 24-25, 2008
Gander. For further information contact Krista Vokey, kvokey@gov.nl.ca.

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CONFERENCE
May 12-14, 2008
Holiday Inn, St. John's. The official speaking line-up for the first provincial conference on sexual and reproductive health has been announced. Over 20 speakers presenting on topics relevant to our provincial health care professionals – an excellent personal and professional development conference for nurses, physicians, social workers, pyschologists, teachers and administrators. Topics of note include the Internet and sex, deviance and sexual health, fertility treatment, sexual exploitation, maternity needs of immigrant women and much more. For further information contact karen.m@Nlsexualhealthcentre.org or call 709.579.1009 for additional conference information.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PRINCIPALS NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2008
May 14-16, 2008
Delta Conference Centre, St. John's. Featuring speakers Dr. Avis Glaze: *Leadership Imperatives for Canadian School Administrators*; Barry MacDonald: *Mentoring Boys for Success at School*; Gwynne Dyer: *Changing Canadian Demographics and the Implications for Educational Leaders*; Alfie Kohn: *Testing and Grading and Homework – But Why? Rethinking Traditional Practices in Education*. A host of educators from our own province will offer a variety of interesting and informative concurrent sessions. For further information visit the conference website at www.cap2008.ca.

EINSTEIN PLUS TEACHER'S WORKSHOP ON MODERN PHYSICS
July 2008
Waterloo, ON. This popular summer science workshop for teachers is being offered in two sessions (July 2-8 and July 10-16), and is open to international teachers. A total of 80 teachers (40 each per week-long session) will enjoy a unique opportunity to explore cutting edge ideas in modern physics with scientists at Perimeter Institute, learn new and innovative teaching strategies to take back home and share with other educators, and enjoy social events with dynamic teachers from across the world who share the same passion for physics. Deadline for applications is April 15, 2008. For information visit www.einsteinplus.ca or contact Julie Taylor at jtaylor@perimeterinstitute.ca.

NUTRITION INSTITUTE
July 7-9, 2008
Corner Brook. Hosted by the Department of Education. The focus of the three-day institute is on skill development for teachers who work in a food laboratory environment. Priority will be given to teachers of Nutrition 2102/3102. Expressions of interest should be directed to ellencoady@gov.nl.ca.

ATLANTIC CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE EDUCATORS (ACASE) AGM AND CONFERENCE
July 10-12, 2008
St. Mary's University, Halifax. Theme: *Science Engages "Energy"!* For further information go to www.acase.ca or contact Craig White, craigwhite@gov.nl.ca, Tel: 709-729-2614.

EECOM 08 CONFERENCE
September 25-28, 2008
Gros Morne National Park. An Environmental Learning Gathering: Reconnect, Rethink, Rejoice. Approximately 300 Environmental Educators from across the country will attend this three-day event. Keynotes: Father John McCarthy, Bob McDonald and Sarah Harmer. For more information visit www.eecom.org.

Dates to Remember

April 2008
Apr 15 **Deadline:** Notice of postponement of Deferred Salary Leave or withdrawal from DSLP
Apr 30 **Deadline:** Deferred Salary Leave Applications
Apr 30 **Deadline:** Year-end resignation from contract

May 2008
May 7 **Deadline:** Notification by Board of layoff
May 11-17 Branch Election Week
May 15 **Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications

June 2008
June 6-7 NLTA Executive Meeting
June 15 **Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests
June 19 **Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications

July 2008
July 31 **Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship Applications

NLTA Scholarships

To obtain an application form visit the NLTA website at **www.nlta.nl.ca** and click on **"Forms Online"** or contact the NLTA Professional Development Division, Tel: 726-3223 or toll free at 1-800-563-3599.

Application Deadline: July 31, 2008